

Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Workshop
Goods Movement Strategies
Wednesday, October 3, 2007, 1:00 - 4:00 pm
Southern California Association of Governments
818 West Seventh Street, Los Angeles CA 90017

Participants:

Transportation and Communications Committee Members:

Alan Wapner, Chair	Ontario
Harry Baldwin	San Gabriel
Christine Barnes	La Palma
Lou Bone	Tustin
Art Brown	OCTA
Carol Gross	Culver City
Robin Lowe (Videoconference)	Hemet
Barbara Messina	Alhambra
Leroy Mills	Cypress
Lori Abrishami	Metro
Shahrzad Amin	Metro
Sharad Mulchand	Metro
M. Smith	Metro
Jamen Amato	OCTA
Fernando Chorarrío	OCTA
Michael Litschi	OCTA
Greg Nord	OCTA
Helene T. Bibas	LA City Planning
Mara Buritem	EN
Joanna Capelle	SCRRA
Kerry Cartwright	Port of Long Beach
Deborah Chankin	GCCOG
David Chow	IBI Group
Bob Ham	IVAG/El Centro
Christine Yee Hollis	City of LA Council / CLA
Andrea M. Hricko	USC
Lorie Hunter	SB County
Fran Inman	Majestic Realty
Rune Kvarekvaal	citizen
R. Mike Labudzki	City of Burbank
Jesse N. Marquez	Coalition for a Safe Environment
Brad McAllester	Metro
Shirley Medina (Videoconference)	RCTC
Miles Mitchel	LADOT
Peter Okurowski	CEA for Association of American Railroads
Nancy Pfeffer	Network Public Affairs
Todd Priest	BIA/So Cal
Rick Richmond	ACE Const Authority

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Eyvonne Sells

Eric Shen

Steve Smith

Dianna Watson

Leann Williams

John Wickham

Adrian Martinez

Rachel Lopez (videoconference)

AQMD

City of Pasadena Department of Transportation

SANDAG

Caltrans

Caltrans

City of Los Angeles

NRDC

Center for Community Action and Environmental
Justice

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Opening Remarks

Alan Wapner, Chair of the Transportation and Communications Committee, announced that the next workshop will be held on October 4, 2007, and will focus on highways and corridors. The workshop on finance is scheduled for October 11, 2007. That time will be used to discuss financial constraints.

Mr. Wapner referred to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Framework proposed by SCAG staff, a graphic which resembles a bull's eye. At the very center of the circle is the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan (RTIP), followed by an outer circle that is the core RTP. The core RTP is the document that is submitted to the Federal Government and is required to meet environmental requirements and adhere to financial constraints. Finally, the outermost ring is the Strategic Plan, which contains projects that are not yet ready for implementation or do not have committed funding. Projects should be listed in the Strategic Plan before they can be amended into the RTP. In other words, a project should flow from the outer ring towards the center of the diagram (RTIP) as consensus evolves and appropriate funding commitments become available.

In response to a question about earmarks, Mr. Wapner clarified that as long as earmarked projects conform to federal standards, they will be accepted into the Plan. It would be helpful to identify these projects and place them in the Strategic Plan.

The workshop began with a public comment period, followed by an in-depth discussion on each of the Goods Movement projects that are presented in the decision matrix.

Public Comment Period

Dominic Meo, Eveready Marine Services

Mr. Meo presented an informal checklist list of four major planning considerations:

1. How does the particular project affect environmental impact reports?
2. Do we have the ability to control intermodal splits?
3. How do we identify sources of funding?
4. Never pursue a project that cannot be maintained. There needs to be an ongoing funding stream to maintain the infrastructure.

Mr. Meo proposed a plan to create a new state agency, the California Inland Port Authority. This State Agency would assume responsibility for the efficient movement of goods. It would also facilitate Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) at the ports. This plan model is based on the Orange County tollway system whereby public-private partnerships are created and bonds are sold. People will be charged for using the facility. The only way to move goods through the region is to go through the California Inland Port Authority. Dominic did not expect to get a resolution on this issue but wanted to propose this idea to streamline the goods movement process.

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Andrea Hricko, Director, Community Outreach and Education, Southern California Environmental Health Sciences Center

Ms. Hricko announced that a number of members on the Goods Movement Task Force did not receive adequate notice of this workshop. She asked for clarification of the public outreach process.

Brad McAllester, Metro, Executive Officer of Long Range Planning

Mr. McAllester brought up several policy issues for SCAG to consider on Goods Movement:

1. Grade separations and I-710.
2. Prevent the loss of federal funds to our region.
3. Maglev was in the 2004 RTP, but did not conform to federal requirements. Brad hopes SCAG will protect Metro projects.
4. Is conformity met with the current projects or are there additional needs that need to be addressed?

Miles Mitchell, Subregional Coordinator, LADOT

Mr. Mitchell thanked SCAG for the decision matrix. He said that LADOT may be commenting on the matrix at a later date after a more careful review of the matrix.

Policy Discussion Matrix: Project # 1: Freight Rail

SCAG staff recommended clean technology in addition to rail expansion and grade separations. Rail expansion and grade separations are already included in the 2004 RTP. Hasan Ikhrata, SCAG Director of Planning and Policy, explained that for the RTP to be financially constrained, revenue funds must be reasonably expected. Therefore, SCAG makes several reasonable assumptions about revenue sources, including potential revenues that could be generated as a result of the passage of Lowenthal's SB 974 as well as potential increase in revenue from the gas tax. Mr. Ikhrata further explained that SCAG accepts the priority projects that the transportation commissions provide to SCAG, and the projects being discussed today have to be agreed upon to be included in the Plan.

Mr. Ikhrata clarified that SCAG does not expect all grade crossings to be done by 2014, but rather 2035. Cleaner rail technology will utilize Tier 4 engines which will not be available until 2017. Mr. Ikhrata encourages the Region to accelerate the ability to use the technology when it first becomes available, and does not propose that MetroLink or the railroads bear the entire cost of the technology. In response to a question about financial sources, Mr. Ikhrata replied that the October 11th Workshop on finance will clarify what funding sources may be available to pay for rail capacity enhancements. The amount of \$800 million committed is strictly for grade separations; \$6.8 billion is the total cost identified for both rail capacity expansion & grade separations.

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Joanna Capelle, Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA), expressed concern with the proposed technology because it does not currently exist. She was also concerned with the construction required to perform the grade separations and its severe impact on freight and passenger travel.

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) announced that some credit should be given to existing efforts. MetroLink uses low sulfur technology and the railroads are trying to improve their locomotives. Orange County has 56 locomotives that use this technology (that would be my guess) and has committed \$20 million.

Carol Gross, Culver City, suggested considering the pollution created by electrification.

Michael Litschi, OCTA, recommended that both grade separations & clean technologies be included as part of the constrained plan. However, he requested further explanation to how this project could be included in the RTP if there is no current committed funding.

Adrian Martinez, The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), requested to see a list of all rail expansion projects.

Jesse Marquez, Coalition for a Safe Environment, expressed concern that the meeting was not adequately communicated to the public and that there should be one in the evening. Jesse requested documents to be available in advance of the meeting and would like to get a list of all grade separations. He also asserted that the public does not support expansion of railroads that are fueled by petroleum. The \$30 fee for containers is arbitrary and according to studies, the actual fee should be levied at \$200 per container per study done by SCAG.

Rachel Lopez, Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice, via videoconferencing from the Riverside Office, requested that maps containing the grade separations be posted online.

Mr. Wapner confirmed that there was concurrence to move forward with the grade separations and the clean technology.

Policy Discussion Matrix: Project #2: Truck Lanes

In 1998, the Region looked for ways to move truck traffic from mixed flow lanes to separate rights-of-way. At that time, SCAG proposed truck lanes to run from the ports or I-710 to SR-60 East and then to I-15 toward Nevada. There was much debate regarding the routes. The region pursued multi-county studies and to this day, we are still grappling with the truck and goods movement issue. It took ten years for SCAG to commit to an environmental study of I-710. SCAG recommends moving the I-710 portion to the RTP and including the SR-60 and I-15 portions in the Strategic Plan. SCAG also envisions the use of Long Combination Vehicles (LCVs) even though they are currently prohibited by the State Constitution.

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Ms. Gross expressed concern that if the lanes were assigned for the use of clean trucks, then that would result in dirty trucks continuing to mix with autos.

Mr. Wapner responded that the cleaner trucks would have a competitive advantage by moving goods at a faster rate.

Mr. Martinez recommended a more viable option that utilizes advanced technologies to move goods rather than truck lanes. He does not support truck lanes.

Andrea Hricko, University of Southern California (USC), was concerned with the assumptions used to model truck lanes and their impact on congestion. She also asserted that long combination vehicles are banned in most places and that enforcement is strict. Lastly, Ms. Hricko cautioned that if the I-15 portion is included in the RTP, residents need to be informed now.

Mr. Marquez noted that there is absolutely no public support for two lanes on the Long Beach freeway. Residents do support electrification for the Alameda Corridor. Before any decisions are made, it needs to go back to the public.

The City of Burbank applauded efforts of the Long Beach Port for moving goods at night during non-peak hours. Other ports should do the same.

Deborah Chankin, Gateway Cities Council of Governments (GCCOG), supports SCAG's recommendation, and requests to work with SCAG staff on developing the language to a locally preferred strategy so that it does not predetermine an outcome of the EIR since the EIR will be looking at alternatives. The EIR needs to move forward.

Barbara Messina, Alhambra, responded to Mr. Marquez' comment by stating that as a public official of many years, she is certain that communities along the I-710 support truck lanes.

Kerry Cartwright, Port of Long Beach/Los Angeles, announced that he manages both studies that look at alternatives technologies. He feels that the corridor is a viable first segment because it has utility, a conceptual design, allows for movement to rail yards, and merges to SR-60 and I-15. Two ports are contributing to the EIR.

Mr. Wapner confirmed concurrence to move forward with the truck lanes project.

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Policy Discussion Matrix: Project #3: Alternative Technology Conveyance for Freight Only Component

SCAG staff supports the fully elevated system over public transportation corridors linking the San Pedro Ports with potential inland port facilities. This freight only component was not included in the 2004 RTP. Mr. Ikhrata explained that if we had a letter of commitment from a private entity, SCAG would have no problem including it in the constrained plan.

Ms. Messina questioned the project's reality and asserted that she would like to see this project in the Strategic Plan to free up funds.

Mr. Wapner expressed that we have a difficult time separating passenger from freight with Maglev. He suggested waiting to hear more information from the Maglev Task Force.

Ms. Gross advocated placing the project in the Strategic Plan because she does not see this project on the same level as other projects.

Robin Lowe, Hemet, also felt that this project should be placed in the strategic plan due to the lack of funding.

Mr. Martinez argued for a type of advanced container system to be included in the RTP. The Clean Air Action Plan included an advanced container movement system. NRDC supports and encourages some kind of advanced technology to move goods due to a crisis in air quality.

Mr. Marquez supported the technology to be added to the RTP or the Strategic Plan. He stated that he is aware of at least four companies that would provide a letter of intent to fund such a project.

Mr. Wapner expressed his interest in communicating with these companies and asked Mr. Marquez to talk to SCAG staff.

Christine Barnes, La Palma, showed support for the project and encouraged looking into the future and not waiting until it is too late to explore alternatives.

Mr. Wapner sees more support to place this project in the Strategic Plan. He stated that this issue will be brought up again on the October 11th Finance Workshop.

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Policy Discussion Matrix: Project #4: Inland Port

The idea of this project is for inland ports to take containers and ship them elsewhere. Access to the inland ports is publicly financed, but the inland ports are private. SCAG recommended placing this Project in the Strategic Plan

Lorie Hunter, SB County, stated that she oversaw the development of the highway between Victorville and Palmdale. She stated that there has actually been some funds expended. For the High Desert Corridor, they have received \$14 million from FHWA. Victorville has designated \$200 million for access to the inland ports.

Mr. Cartwright recommended placing this project in the Strategic Plan. He claims that it is not relevant to port capacity.

Mr. Wapner confirmed concurrence to place the Inland Port project in the Strategic Plan for further study.